Mr. Atul Sinha, Minister (Agriculture), Embassy of India, Rome

Mr. Butshikan Singh, Dy. Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, Rome

Ms. Sujata Mehta, Director(S), PMO

Dr. Visinubhotla G.R. Shastry, Personal Physician to PM

Mr. Mahendra Jain, Private Secretary to PM.

**Disparties in the allocation of Kerosene among States**

2474. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the wide disparties in respect of quantum of allocation of kerosene amongst various State Governments/UTs.;

(b) the reasons for certain States getting less amount of kerosene from the national average;

(c) whether Government are aware of the diversion of a large amount of kerosene by the distributors; and

(d) the action taken against such distributors against whom complaints have been received?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Kerosene is allocated to States/UTs. on the basis of past demand, offtake trends and relative need. Only 60% of the required quantity of kerosene is indigenously produced. The balance is imported. It is not possible to meet full demands of States/UTs on account of constraints of product availability, foreign exchange and heavy subsidy involved therein. However, during the years 1993-94, 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97 3% increase was given over and above the allocation in the previous years for the country as a whole. In order to reduce the disparity in its availability among States/UTs, additional quantities were allocated to States/UTs having less per capita consumption.

(c) and (d) in order to check diversion and black-marketing of kerosene, steps such as furfural doping of kerosene, blue dyeing of kerosene, sample testing by mobile laboratories and surprise inspections by field officers of Oil Companies and State authorities are undertaken. Action is taken against the erring dealers under the Marketing Discipline Guidelines. The Central Government has requested the State Governments to rationalise the system of retail distribution to identify points of diversion and to take steps to plug the loopholes to prevent black-marketing of kerosene, so that it reaches the targeted groups in time and in desired quantities and at prescribed prices.

**Acqusistion of Land for setting up Steel Plants in Orissa**

2475. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the names of different public and private sector companies which acquired land in Orissa to set up steel plants;

(b) the total land acquired by those companies at different places of the State;

(c) the progress made in the establishment of those steel plants; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (d) The informaiton is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

**Filling up backlog vacancies reserved for Backward Communities**

2476. SHRI R. MARGABANDU: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether SC/ST employment is reviewed every year and backlog

vacancies are filled up from amongst persons belonging to these communiites;

(b) whether any such review is being done for the Backward Classes also; and

(c) if so, whether there is any proposal by Government to review backlog vacancies of employment for backward communities?

THE MINISTER OF WALFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) and (b) The position of appointments of SC/ST/OBC candidates is reviewed in respect of each calendar year. Special Recruitment Drives are also conducted for clearing the backlog of vacancies for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

(c) No, Sir.

**Action plan to provide gainful employment in khadi and village industries sector**

2477. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have prepared any action plan to provide gainful employment on a sustained basis in the khadi and village industries sector in the country, particularly in the rural Gujarart;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any plan outlay has been earmarked for this purpose; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Based on the recommendations of the High Power Committee, KVIC is implementing the Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) to create 2 million additional employment in the country through development of khadi and village industries. The programme includes (1) District Special Employment Programme (2) 125 Block Development Programme, (3) National Programme on Leather, Handmade paper, Beekeeping and Pottery and (4) Special Projects in thrust areas. In Gujarat, three districts namely Banaskhantha, Panchmahl and Kutch have been identified for the District Special Employment programme and 6 blocks, namely Dharampur, Dhanduka, Jasdan, Megraj, Savarkundla and Desada have been selected for the Block Development Programme. In addition to this, a few projects are also being taken up.

(c) and (d) HPC has estimated a total outlay of Rs. 5600 crores for the REGP involving about 1/3rd amounting to about Rs. 1865 crores as the budgetary support from the Government and the remaining as credit from the banks and financial institutions. For the year 1996-97, an amount of Rs. 6.30 crores has been earmarked by the KVIC for the State of Gujarat as per details given below:—

| | Idnetified Programmes | (Rs. in cores) |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | District SEP | 3.00 |
| 2. | Block SEP | 1.80 |
| 3. | Spl. Projects | 1.50 |
| | Total : | 6.30 |

**Hike in the Prices of Steel**

2478. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether domestic steel majors may defer the plan to go for a sizeable across the board hike in steel prices and wait for steel market to improve to absorb the major part of the cost escalation burden;

(b) whether changing competitiveness in the steel market has also forced Tata Steel to change its price revision period from twice a year to four times a year;

(c) whether SAIL has already announced that it will be forced to hike steel prices; and

(d) the extent to which the prices of steel will be increased?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL & MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a)